

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-08 COME-00
AGRE-00 /089 W
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R 222117Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1686
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMCONSUL CURACAO
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PERP PINS SHUM PINT ECON UK NU VE
SUBJECT: THIS WEEK IN VENEZUELA

REF: (A) CARACAS 2676, (B) CARACAS 2597

SUMMARY: INDEPENDENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE RENNY
OTTOLINA DIES IN PLANE CRASH. NEWS MAGAZINE DIRECTOR
OLAVARRIA DEPARTS FOR NICARAGUA. PRINCE CHARLES VISITS
VENEZUELA TO DRUM UP TRADE. VENEZUELA TO RESTRICT COFFEE
EXPORTS. END SUMMARY.

1. INDEPENDENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE RENNY OTTOLINA
CONFIRMED DEAD IN PLANE CRASH.

AFTER AN INTENSE FIVE-DAY SEARCH BY GOV AUTHORITIES AND
HUNDREDS OF VOLUNTEERS, THE WRECKAGE OF THE AIRPLANE
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CARRYING INDEPEDENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE RENNY OTTOLINA
AND FOUR COMPANIONS WAS LOCATED IN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN
SOME 15 MILES NORTHEAST OF CARACAS. ALL WERE DEAD AND
WILL PROBABLY BE BURIED MARCH 22. OTTOLINA WAS EN ROUTE TO
MARGARITA ISLAND WHEN THE PLANE RAN INTOTROUBLEAND LOST
CONTACT WITH THE CONTROL TOWER TEN MINUTES AFTER TAKE OFF.
COMMENT: FOR THE MOMENT, NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY WHERE THE

SIGNIFICANT PROTEST VOTE ATTRACTED TO OTTOLINA'S CANDIDACY WILL GO. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE DIVIDED AMONG THE VARIOUS CANDIDATES. OTHERS BELIEVE THAT IF DIEGO ARRIA RUNS FOR PRESIDENT AS AN INDEPENDENT, HE WILL ATTRACT SOME OF WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN RENNY'S. END COMMENT.

2. NEWS MAGAZINE DIRECTOR OLAVARRIA DEPARTS FOR NICARAGUA. AFTER RECEIVING POLITICAL ASYLUM FROM THE NICARAGUAN EMBASSY AND BEING GRANTED SAFE CONDUCT BY THE GOV, "RESUMEN" MAGAZINE DIRECTOR JORGE OLAVARRIA FLEW TO MANAGUA MARCH 21. OLAVARRIA'S PERSONAL LEGAL DIFFICULTIES HAD EVOLVED INTO A MAJOR CLASH WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ AND CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE INFORMATION MINISTRY (REF A). THE DIRECTOR-IN-CHARGE OF THE WIDELY-CIRCULATED MAGAZINE ACCUSED THE GOV OF AN "EXCESS OF POWER" AND OF ACTIONS "AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW." A COMMITTEE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN CARACAS IN SEVERAL DAYS TO STUDY THE OLAVARRIA CASE. THE GOV HAS REMAINED SILENT SINCE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S STATEMENT GRANTING OLAVARRIA SAFE CONDUCT. COMMENT: AFTER A DRAWN OUT AND SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSING TUSSELE, THE GOV IS NO DOUBT HAPPY TO RID OF OLAVARRIA. HIS SNIPING AT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ANGERED A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT PEOPLE, NOT LEAST PRESIDENT PEREZ. THEY WILL NO DOUBT REGARD THE SAFE CONDUCT AND THE ACCOMPANYING PUBLIC SUSPICIONS THAT SOME OF OLAVARRIA'S CHARGES MIGHT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE TRUE AS A HEAVY, BUT NOT EXORBITANT PRICE TO BE RID

OF HIM. AFTER VISITING THE U.S., OLAVARRIA WILL PROBABLY SETTLE IN CURACAO AND TRY TO RUN HIS MAGAZINE FROM THERE. IT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT THE LEGAL TANGLE LEFT BEHIND BY OLAVARRIA MAY ENSNARE "RESUMEN" AND MUTE IT, AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE DECEMBER 1978 ELECTIONS. END COMMENT.

3. PRINCE CHARLES VISITS VENEZUELA.

PRINCE CHARLES OF THE UK ARRIVED IN CARACAS MARCH 16 FOR A SIX-DAY STATE VISIT TO VENEZUELA. ALTHOUGH PRIMARILY ON A COURTESY VISIT, PRINCE CHARLES ALSO REVIEWED THE ANGLO-VENEZUELAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT, CONCLUDED IN AUGUST 1977, IN FRIENDLY BUT NOT TOO SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ, FONMIN CONSALVI, ENERGY AND MINES MINISTER VALENTIN HERNANDEZ AND DEVELOPMENT MINISTER LUIS ALVAREZ DOMINGUEZ. DURING A THREE-DAY TOUR OF THE VENEZUELAN INTERIOR, PRINCE CHARLES VISITED VENEZUELAN IRON ORE AND STEEL INDUSTRIES AS WELL AS OTHER MINING PROJECTS BEING SUPPLIED OR ASSISTED BY BRITISH FIRMS.

COMMENT: DESPITE THE DEMOCRATIC AND EGALITARIAN STRAINS IN VENEZUELAN SOCIETY, ROYALTY IS STERLING, HARD CURRENCY HERE. THE VENEZUELAN LOVED THE PRINCE WHO, LIKE HIS ELIZABETHAN PREDECESSORS, IS INTERESTED IN BOOSTING TRADE WITH THE NEW WORLD. END COMMENT.

4. VENEZUELA TO RESTRICT COFFEE EXPORTS

VENEZUELA WILL ABIDE BY AN AGREEMENT REACHED RECENTLY IN EL SALVADOR WITH SEVEN OTHER COUNTRIES AND PROHIBIT EXPORTS OF COFFEE UNTIL PRICES IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS IMPROVE. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE MARCH 17 BY PEDRO ANGEL VAZQUEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COFFEE FUND. VENEZUELAN SOURCES ESTIMATE AVAILABLE COFFEE FOR EXPORT THIS YEAR COULD BE AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MUCH AS 250,000 QUINTALS. APPROXIMATELY 100,000 QUINTALS HAD BEEN SOLD OR CONTRACTED FOR AT THE TIME OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

5. OTHER REPORTING THIS WEEK INCLUDED RESIGNATION OF INFORMATION MINISTER ACCEPTED (CARACAS 2646), BRAZILIAN FONMIN OFFICIAL ON BRAZILIAN RELATIONS WITH THE US AND LATIN AMERICA (CARACAS 2666), NEWS MAGAZINE DIRECTOR OLAVARRIA SEEKS ASYLUM IN NICARAGUAN EMBASSY (CARACAS 2676), NEW INFORMATION MINISTER SWORN IN (CARACAS 2678), TWENTY-SEVEN CUBANS ARRIVE IN CARACAS (CARACAS 2692), GOV NOMINATION FOR UN POSITION (CARACAS 2742), COURT ARBITRATION OF BEAGLE CHANNEL (CARACAS 2735), RECIPROCAL CIVIL AVIATION TAX AGREEMENT SIGNED (CARACAS 2607), GOV NOT HAPPY WITH RESULTS OF UNCTAD TDB MINISTERIAL (CARACAS 2637), CAF MINISTERIAL MEETING IN CARACAS WEEK OF MARCH 17 (CARACAS 2636), EXXON CONCERN ABOUT JAMAICA (CARACAS 2656), MAJOR PROJECT: INTERALUMINA BAUXITE TO ALUMINA PROJECT (CARACAS 2679), PROPOSED AGREEMENT FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION (CARACAS 2715).
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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Subject: THIS WEEK IN VENEZUELA
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, SHUM, PINT, ECON, UK, NU, VE
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Declassified/Released
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20 Mar 2014
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